

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01

SY-04 AID-05 SCCT-01 /077 W  
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R 301255Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1940

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

UNCLAS TRIPOLI 128

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PINS ET

SUBJECT: ERITREAN LEADER OTHMAN SEBBAH ON NEGOTIATIONS  
WITH EPMG, ELF TACTICS

REF: TRIPOLI 87

1. SEBBAH HAS BEEN IN LIBYA FOR OVER WEEK AND MET WITH QADHAFI JAN 20 (REFTEL). FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEW HE GAVE LIBYAN PRESS BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE JAN 29 WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST TO ADDRESSEES.

2. ELF-PLF DISPUTE: ASKED ABOUT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RIVAL ERITREAN FACTIONS SEBBAH SAID THAT "IN ANY CASE, UNITY BETWEEN ERITREANS IS POSSIBLE AND CLOSE AT HAND". ARMED CLASHES BETWEEN TWO WINGS OF ELF HAD COMPLETELY STOPPED NOW. HE HAD VAGUE PRAISE FOR QADHAFI'S ROLE.

3. NEGOTIATIONS WITH EFMG. SEBBAH SAID THAT CONFLICTING STATEMENTS BY ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES ON READINESS TO NEGOTIATE WITH ELF INDICATED THERE WAS DIFFERENCE OF OPINION WITHIN REGIME. IF EFMG REALLY WANTED PEACE, IT UNCLASSIFIED

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SHOULD MAKE ITS POSITION CLEAR. IT HAD DECLARED ITS

READINESS TO NEGOTIATE, AS RESULT OF INTERNAL PRESSURE AND PRESSURE FROM ARAB STATES ETHIOPIAN DELEGATION HAD VISITED RECENTLY. "BUT ETHIOPIA HAS NOT PRESENTED ANY PROPOSAL FOR THE PEACEFUL SOLUTION IT TALKS ABOUT, TO EXPLAIN TO US THE MEANING OF WHAT IT IS SEEKING. THEREFORE WE CONTINUE TO ASK THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT, IF IT IS REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT ACHIEVING PEACE, TO CLARIFY ITS INTENTIONS IN DETAIL AND PRECISION, AND TO SAY WHAT IT WANTS. IN BRIEF, THAT IT ACCEPT OUR CONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH ARE:

--THAT NEGOTIATIONS TAKE PLACE ON THE BASIS OF COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE,  
--THAT THESE NEGOTIATIONS TAKE PLACE IN A NEUTRAL CAPITAL ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES, WITH THE ATTENDANCE OF INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATORS FROM UN, ARAB LEAGUE, OR OAU,  
--THAT THE MATTER OF COMMON INTERESTS BE RAISED, PARTICULARLY THE ETHIOPIANS TRANSIT OF ERITREAN PORTS, COMMERCE, CUSTOMS, ETC."

4. ELF STRATEGY: SEBBAH SAID THAT ERITREAN STRATEGY HAD CHANGED IN LAST FIVE MONTHS. ATTACKS WERE NOW CONCENTRATED IN CITIES, ESPECIALLY ASMARA. "IT IS TRUE THAT WE HAVE PAID A HIGH PRICE FOR THIS ESCALATION". ETHIOPIAN FORCES HAD RETALIATED AGAINST CIVILIANS, AND TWO HUNDRED HAD BEEN KILLED. LATEST OPERATION HAD BEEN ATTACK ON POLICE HEADQUARTERS IN ASMARA IN BROAD DAYLIGHT. A NUMBER OF POLICE OFFICERS HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED, AND THE BUILDING DESTROYED. SEBBAH SAID ETHIOPIAN SECURITY FORCES COOPERATED WITH REBELS, SINCE MOST OF THEM WERE OF ERITREAN ORIGIN. GENERAL JIT OOM (PHONETIC) OF ETHIOPIAN POLICE HAD RECENTLY JOINED THE REVOLUTION TOGETHER WITH SOME OF HIS FORCE. SAME WAS TRUE OF NAVY AND AIR FORCE. ELF WOULD ESCALATE MILITARY STRUGGLE, BUT WAS AT SAME TIME READY FOR NEGOTIATIONS--TWO TACTICS WERE NOT CONFLICTING, BUT COMPLEMENTARY.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, PINS, ET, (SEBBAH, OTHMAN)  
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